

Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program

FY 2007 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 16, 2007



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

TRIBAL COLLEGES EDUCATION EQUITY GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.221

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on April 16, 2007 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES requests new applications for the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program (TCEG) for fiscal year (FY) 2007 to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans by strengthening instructional programs in the food and agricultural sciences at the thirty-three colleges or universities designated as 1994 Land-Grant Institutions. CSREES anticipates approximately \$ 405,000.00 to support applications submitted in response to this RFA for FY 2007.

This notice identifies the objectives for TCEG projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed for new applicants to apply for TCEG grants. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....	<u>5</u>
A. Legislative Authority and Background.....	<u>5</u>
B. Purpose and Priorities	<u>5</u>
C. Program Area Description.....	<u>6</u>
PART II—AWARD INFORMATION.....	<u>9</u>
A. Available Funding.....	<u>9</u>
B. Types of Applications	<u>9</u>
C. Project Types.....	<u>9</u>
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	<u>10</u>
A. Eligible Applicants.....	<u>10</u>
B. Cost Sharing or Matching	<u>10</u>
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	<u>11</u>
A. Address to Request Application Package	<u>11</u>
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	<u>12</u>
C. Submission Dates and Times	<u>16</u>
D. Funding Restrictions	<u>16</u>
E. Other Submission Requirements	<u>17</u>
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS	<u>19</u>
A. General	<u>19</u>
B. Evaluation Criteria	<u>19</u>
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality.....	<u>20</u>
D. Organizational Management Information.....	<u>20</u>
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION.....	<u>20</u>
A. General	<u>20</u>
B. Award Notice	<u>20</u>
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	<u>21</u>
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements	<u>21</u>
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT	<u>26</u>
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION.....	<u>24</u>
A. Access to Review Information.....	<u>25</u>
B. Use of Funds; Changes.....	<u>25</u>
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards	<u>26</u>
D. Regulatory Information.....	<u>26</u>
E. Definitions	<u>26</u>
F. CSREES’ Grants.gov Implementation Plans.....	<u>29</u>
G. DUNS Number.....	<u>29</u>

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Authority for this program is contained in the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. section 301 note) as amended by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. section 7601). The USDA, through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), will award grants to the thirty 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended. This Act, as amended in Section 533(a), requires that each 1994 Land-Grant Institution be accredited or making progress towards accreditation and be recognized as a legal entity. Where accreditation is being sought, a college must demonstrate its progress towards accreditation by a letter from a nationally recognized accreditation agency affirming receipt of application for an accreditation site visit or other such documentation.

B. Purpose and Priorities

As the lead Federal Agency for higher education in the food and agricultural sciences, USDA is authorized to serve as the Agency responsible for administering the TCEG Program. The purpose of TCEG is to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans by strengthening instructional programs in the food and agricultural sciences at the thirty-three colleges or universities designated as 1994 Land-Grant Institutions. Appropriations are awarded equally among the Tribal Colleges or Universities upon approval of all eligible institutions' applications for grants, including the Plans of Work related to the institutions' long-range goals. An application may address a single targeted Need Area or multiple targeted Need Areas, and may be focused on a single subject matter area or multiple subject matter areas, in any combination.

Recognizing that strengthening instructional programs is a long-term ongoing process, the TCEG program is interested in funding projects to strengthen institutional capacity, and institutions are encouraged to build on a theme over several grant awards to reach institutional long-range goals.

C. Program Area Description

For purposes of applications responding to this announcement please note that the official **PROGRAM NAME is: Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program**; and the official **PROGRAM CODE is: KX**.

Applications are being solicited for the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program under the following targeted Need Areas:

(1) Curricula Design and Materials Development

The purpose of this Need Area is to promote new and improved curricula and materials **for courses offered for college credit** to increase the quality of teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences. Emphasis may be on the development of modules or courses of study, degree programs, or instructional materials; the use of new instructional approaches to enhance student learning; or the introduction of new subjects or new applications of knowledge pertaining to the food and agricultural sciences. The acquisition of library materials relating to the food and agricultural sciences also is allowed under this Need Area.

(2) Faculty Development and Preparation for Teaching

This Need Area promotes development of college faculty teaching competencies, subject matter expertise, or skill in recruiting and advising students. Developmental activities may include both formal training and non-formal continuing education. Each faculty recipient of monetary support for this Need Area must meet the requirements of an “eligible participant” as defined in this RFA.

(3) Instruction Delivery Systems

The purpose of this Need Area is to encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Differences in the learning styles of students often require alternative instructional methodologies. Also, the rising costs of higher education strongly suggest that colleges and universities undertake more efforts of a collaborative nature in order to deliver instruction which maximizes program quality and reduces unnecessary duplication. At the same time, advancements in knowledge and technology continue to introduce new subject matter areas which warrant consideration and implementation of innovative instruction techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems.

(4) Student Experiential Learning

The Need Area of experiential learning is intended to develop scientific and professional competencies by providing students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-life situations. Such experiential learning opportunities are most effective when they advance decision-making and communication skills as well as technical expertise. Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or development purposes must be enrolled at

an “eligible institution” as defined in this RFA and must meet the requirements of an “eligible participant” as defined in this RFA.

(5) Equipment and Instrumentation for Teaching

The purpose of this Need Area is to provide teachers and students with suitable, up-to-date equipment. The initiative may include the acquisition of laboratory or classroom instructional equipment to assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences higher education programs. Requests may entail acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional equipment, upgrading existing equipment, or replacing non-functional or clearly obsolete equipment. This need area is likely to support one of the other listed Need Areas.

(6) Student Recruitment and Retention

This Need Area is to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to secure the future strength of the Nation's scientific and professional work force by attracting and preparing academically outstanding students for careers as food and agricultural scientists and professionals. It is particularly important to augment the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of students in the food and agricultural sciences in order to achieve more effective use of the Nation's intellectual resources. Therefore, modest financial incentives to enroll and specialize in the food and agricultural sciences may be offered to students enrolled in any institution eligible to apply under this RFA. Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or development purposes must be enrolled at an “eligible institution” as defined in this RFA and must meet the requirements of an “eligible participant” as defined in this RFA.

Note: In addition to addressing one or more of the Need Areas above, each applicant must submit a one-page Stakeholder Input Report or Stakeholder Input Plan. (See Part IV, 4. Project Summary.) Applicants are required to establish, implement and describe a procedure for gathering stakeholder input regarding this program and submit such information to CSREES as part of their annual application. Accordingly, each applicant must: (a) report actions taken to seek stakeholder input that encourages their participation; (b) provide a brief statement on the process used by the recipient institution to identify individuals and groups who are stakeholders and to collect input from them; and (c) provide a statement of how collected input was considered. (See 7 CFR Part 3418).

Institutions that have not had the opportunity to solicit and consider Stakeholder input prior to the submission of this year's application are to submit a Stakeholder Input Plan which delineates: 1) actions taken or plans developed to identify individuals and groups who are stakeholders; 2) planned actions to encourage the participation of stakeholders; and 3) how stakeholder input will be considered in the future. For FY 2007, institutions responding to this announcement may submit such a Plan as part of their application. However, in the future it is expected that applicants will have implemented their stakeholder Input Plan and will be required to submit a formal Stakeholder Input Report as part of the annual grant application. Failure to provide an acceptable Stakeholder Input Report each FY will result in that FY's allocation being redistributed to other eligible institutions.

TCEG encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_-_March_14%2C_2006_-_YEAR_2.pdf). This content is for end users, as opposed to staff development, and must align with the eXtension Implementation Plan (available at <http://about.extension.org/wiki/Planning>). Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (COPs) (http://about.extension.org/wiki/Glossary_of_eXtension_Terms#Community_of_Practice_.28Co_P.29;) or form new COPs that focus on **increased capacity for food and agricultural science education** (for examples of developing COPs and guidance on forming COPs, see http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Main_Page).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. CSREES anticipates that approximately \$ 405,000.00 will be available to fund applications submitted in response to this RFA in FY 2007. Eligible institutions may not apply for more than ¼ of the anticipated funds available in FY 2007.

CSREES anticipates a redistribution of additional funds in FY 2007 to successful applicants under the TCEG program. Should funds be available after selection of successful applicants under this RFA, those funds will be distributed equally among all TCEG awardees under this program. There may be budget revisions required for the additional funding.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2007, only new applications may be submitted in response to this RFA. A new application is one that has not been previously submitted to the TCEG Program. All new applications will be reviewed using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V-Application Review Requirements. The 1994 Land Grant Institutions eligible to submit for FY 2007 funding under this RFA are:

- D-Q University
- Haskell Indian Nations University
- Si Tanka College
- Sisseton Wahpeton Community College

C. Project Types

In FY 2007, applications should be submitted for a 3-year project period (FY 2007 through FY 2009) as CSREES anticipates making these awards as continuation grants. A continuation grant is an award for which an application is approved, but each year of funding is awarded on an annual basis and subject to the availability of annual appropriations and satisfactory progress of the project.

New awards made in FY 2007 will provide funds for the first year of the new projects. It is anticipated that approximately \$ 65,000.00 will be awarded in years FY2008 and FY2009 to each TCEG awardee.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by 1994 Land-Grant Institutions that did NOT receive a TCEG award in FY 2006.

The 1994 Land Grant Institutions eligible to submit for FY 2007 funding under this RFA are:

- D-Q University
- Haskell Indian Nations University
- Si Tanka College
- Sisseton Wahpeton Community College

As a condition of eligibility, Section 533(a) of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended, requires that each 1994 Land-Grant Institution be accredited or making progress towards accreditation and be recognized as a legal entity. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

CSREES does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to CSREES in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AOR should see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. Download and install PureEdge Viewer, a small, free program that provides access to the grant application. See http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pureedge.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**,” enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-CSREES-TCEG-000528** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “[CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov](#).” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating PureEdge forms, using PureEdge with a Macintosh computer), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

- Grants.gov customer support
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726
Business Hours: M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Standard Time
Email: support@grants.gov

See <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “[A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.](#)” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide.

1. R&R Other Project Information Form

a. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 6. on the Form).

The summary should be approximately 250 words. The names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and co-PDs should be listed in addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a self contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish the first year project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of the TCEG program. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary as a PDF file. Supplemental attachments are **only accepted in PDF format**.

In addition, please attach a Stakeholder Input Plan to Project Summary. The Plan should be limited to one page and should delineate: 1) actions taken or plans developed to identify individuals and groups who are stakeholders; 2) planned actions to encourage the participation of Stakeholders; and 3) how stakeholder input will be considered in the future. (See Part I, C. (6).)

b. Project Narrative (Field 7. on the Form).

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum 25 pages has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

- (1) Project Description with appendices
- (2) References

1. Project Description

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Description shall not exceed 10 pages of written text and up to three additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (13 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable consideration.

The Project Description must include or address all of the following areas (A–E):

(A) Overall Objectives for the 3-Year Plan (limit one page)

Identify what overall impact this 3-year project will have on improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences education and how it will increase the capacity of the institution's teaching programs. (This plan should assume level funding for all 3 years [see Part II C.]).

Include:

- (1) Proposed purpose,
- (2) Proposed outcome(s), and
- (3) Audience to be served.

(B) Specific Objectives for the 3-Year Plan (limit six pages)

- (1) Clearly identify what targeted Need Areas this proposed 3-year project will address. If more than one is identified, define the interrelationship of these Targeted Need Areas and the overall long-range impact this project will have on improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences education.
- (2) Discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise or promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.
- (3) Discuss the specific objectives to be accomplished under the 3-year program.
- (4) Describe the overall procedures for accomplishing the objectives in the 3-year plan.
- (5) Discuss how long-term project benefits will expand and strengthen the capacity of the institution.
- (6) Describe how this long-term plan will build on existing programs at the institution and serve to advance the institution's Strategic Plan.
- (7) Discuss plans to assimilate and distribute information acquired as a result of this project and identify target audiences for distribution.

(8) Identify key positions that will have project responsibilities associated with this 3-year plan including responsibility for project evaluation and dissemination of project results.

(9) Provide a timetable for conducting the activities through the life of the project. Identify all important milestones as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination of results and project close-out.

(10) Provide a methodology and implementation plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated objectives, products and outcomes during the life of the project. Develop indicators of progress and measurable outcomes. Describe any data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met. Provide a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the end results upon conclusion of the project.

(C) Activities for Current Year (Work Plan) (limit three pages)

(1) Clearly identify and discuss the specific objectives to be accomplished with current year funding and describe their relation within the 3-year plan.

(2) Describe the procedures for accomplishing these objectives.

(3) Discuss the project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project.

(4) Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds.

(5) Provide a timetable for conducting the activities associated with the current year Plan. Indicate all milestones relating to start-up, execution, evaluation. Explain how resources will be utilized within the year to reach completion of all stated activities.

(6) Explain the expected products and results from achieving the annual objectives and their potential impact on strengthening the capacity of food and agricultural sciences at your institution. Describe the method for determining how the annual evaluation results will be assessed in relation to the overall project impact.

(D) Appendices

(E) Collaborative Arrangements (including letters of support)

2. References

All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Description.

3. Budget

a. Budget Preparation

Prepare the Budget in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. CSREES is requiring that four (4) budget forms (FY07, FY08, FY09 and three year cumulative) will need to be submitted to reflect the life cycle of this program. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project (see Part IV, D. for applicable funding restrictions). Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see section b. below.)

b. Budget Narrative

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget form. If consulting, or sub-contractual arrangements are included in the application, these arrangements should be fully explained and justified. The rate of pay for any consultant must be included, if known at the time of application. In multi-state/territory applications, a budget and budget narrative must be included for each state/territory involved. The lead state/territory and each participating state/territory must be identified.

2. **CSREES Supplemental Information Form**

a. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “**Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program**”) and the program code (i.e., enter “**KX**”).

b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 4. on the Form).

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on April 16, 2007 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received a confirmation message from CSREES within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Pursuant to section 533(a) of 7 U.S.C. 301 note, as amended, the indirect costs for the TCEG Program is the full negotiated rate.

Research and Extension projects are not supported under the TCEG Program.

The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility, or to acquire land is not allowed under the TCEG Program.

With prior approval, and in accordance with cost principles set forth in OMB Circular A-87, as applicable, grant funds may be used for improvements, alterations, renovations, or repairs to land or buildings, necessary to carry out a funded project under this program. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that such expenditures are essential to achieving the major purpose for which the grant request is made.

Special Notices (Applicable to Grantees and Subcontractors)

1. CSREES will withhold all funds for an award to an applicant requesting indirect costs if the applicant has not negotiated an indirect cost rate with its cognizant Federal agency.
2. If a grantee is in the process of negotiating an indirect cost rate with its cognizant Federal agency, CSREES will withhold all funds from that grantee until the indirect cost rate has been established.

3. If an institution's indirect cost rate has expired or will expire prior to award announcements, a clear statement on renegotiation efforts must be included in the application.

4. It is incumbent on all applicants to have a current indirect cost rate or begin negotiations to establish an indirect cost rate prior to the submission deadline. Because it may take several months to obtain an indirect cost rate, applicants needing an indirect cost rate are encouraged to start work on establishing these rates well in advance of submitting an application.

In lieu of requesting indirect costs, an applicant may prepare a budget in which all charges in the budget are included as direct costs.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov."

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a two part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a panel of CSREES employees familiar with the goals and objectives of the TCEG program.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual; the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

(1) Overall Objectives for the 3-Year Plan (10 points)

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the overall plan and the institution's ability to recognize and continuously enhance the capacity in the teaching of the food and agricultural sciences.

(2) Specific Objectives for the 3-Year Plan (50 points)

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the 3-year project will have a substantial impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences higher education by strengthening institutional teaching capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, identification of a problem or opportunity, and justification for the project. It will evaluate the soundness of the proposed approach and the quality of the partnerships likely to evolve as a result of the project. Elements include objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, budget support and cost effectiveness of project, expected products and results, evaluation plans, dissemination plans, partnerships and collaborative efforts.

(3) Activities for Current Year (Work Plan) (40 points)

This criterion relates to the degree to which the annual project will strengthen the teaching capacity of the applicant institution. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment and/or materials) available to carry out the project, adequacy of the number and qualifications of the key persons who will carry out the project, institutional enhancement, and assessment of results and impacts, and dissemination of findings. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the

adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional project support, and focuses expertise and activity on targeted educational areas.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

CSREES anticipates a redistribution of additional funds in FY 2007 to successful applicants under the TCEP program. Should funds be available after selection of successful applicants under this RFA, those additional funds will be distributed equally among all eligible institutions under this program. There may be budget revisions required for the additional funding.

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring re-competition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority (ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;

(9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—Government-wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

(1) Project Directors' Meeting

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend a new Project Director's meeting and at least one national Project Directors' meeting, if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the new Project Director's meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and future directions for education reform. The national Project Director's meeting will build on the new Project Director's meeting and will also provide opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results.

(2) Annual Performance Report

An Annual Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the completion of each year of the project. Generally, the Annual Performance Report should provide a concise project overview, a summary of the progress toward project objectives, identify current problems or unusual developments, and include any other information that is pertinent to the ongoing project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award.

(3) Final Comprehensive Performance Report (Final Technical Report)

A Final Comprehensive Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA programmatic contact person within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the Final Comprehensive Performance Report should include: accomplishments in relation to original objectives; products and outcomes; dissemination of products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from project activities; the overall impact on the institution and on the food and agricultural sciences higher education system. The Final Comprehensive Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Comprehensive Performance Report also must contain any other information that may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award.

(4) Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) Reports

Recipients of grants are required to submit annual and summary evaluation reports via the CSREES-Current Research Information System (CRIS). CRIS is an electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects.

(5) Other Reports

Grantees should be aware that CSREES may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with CSREES personnel, or persons retained by CSREES, evaluating the institutional context and the impact of any supported project. Grantees may be asked to provide general information on students and faculty supported, in whole or in part, by a grant awarded under this program. Information that may be requested includes, but is not limited to, standardized academic achievement test scores, grade point averages, academic standing, career patterns, age, race/ethnicity, gender, citizenship, and disability.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Tim Grosser, NPL; Science and Education Resources Development, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service ; United States Department of Agriculture; Stop 2245; 800 9th Street, SW; Washington, DC 20024 - 2245 (202)-690-0402 (phone); (202) 720-3945 (fax); tgrosser@csrees.usda.gov (email)

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the

ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Administrator means the Administrator of CSREES and any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Authorized departmental officer (ADO) means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized organizational representative (AOR) means the president, director, or chief executive officer or other designated official of the applicant organization who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Award means the provision of funds by the Secretary to an entity to assist in the meeting of costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in these application guidelines.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Citizen or national of the United States means (1) A citizen or native resident of a State, the District of Columbia, or any Insular Area; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. When eligibility is claimed solely on the basis of permanent allegiance, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to CSREES upon request.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Education activity means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering associate, baccalaureate or higher degrees.

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the United States as defined in this section.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in the food, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities concerned with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, home economics, rural human ecology, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

Grantee means the 1994 Land-Grant Institution designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Plan of Work means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's outcomes including, a time line, a description of how outcomes are to be achieved, a description of resources to be used or acquired, and the responsibilities expected of all project personnel.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

Project Director means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Secretary who is responsible for the direction and management of the project.

Project period means the total length of time, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority is delegated.

Teaching capacity means the quality and depth of an institution's academic programs infrastructure as evidenced by its: curriculum, teaching faculty, instructional delivery systems, student experiential learning opportunities, scientific instrumentation for teaching, library resources, academic standing and racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of its faculty and student body as well as faculty and student recruitment and retention programs provided by a college or university in order to achieve maximum results in the development of scientific and professional expertise for the Nation's food and agricultural system.

United States means the several States, the territories and possessions of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans

CSREES is continuing to develop its capacity to exchange proposal and grant data electronically with its grantees through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and to process, review, and award proposals and grants electronically.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, CSREES offered an electronic application option for select grant programs and partnered with five institutions to use Grants.gov Apply. CSREES utilized the SF-424 R&R (Research and Related) forms package (see 70 FR 9656, published in the Federal Register on February 28, 2005) along with CSREES Agency-specific forms and instructions to receive the electronic applications. These pilot activities were successful and provided lessons for applicants and CSREES.

As a result, for the FY 2007 (October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007) cycle, CSREES is requiring electronic submission through Grants.gov for some programs while providing a Grants.gov option for others. Please visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/fy07changes.html> for information about FY 2007 submission requirements by program. For more information about CSREES' Grants.gov plans, including important announcements, program implementation, and detailed requirements, see the CSREES' web site, http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other_links/egov/egov.html. The information on these web sites will be updated as appropriate. It is suggested that the sites be visited periodically for important updates.

G. DUNS Number

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, project directors should contact an AOR to obtain the DUNS number or have the AOR begin the steps needed to obtain one.

For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.